

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested. Claims 6-18, 20-26, 28-34, 36-42, and 44-46 remain pending in the present application.

By way of summary, the Office Action rejected Claims 6-18, 20-26, 28-34, 36-42, and 44-46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent App. Publ'n No. 2001/0030827 to Morohashi (hereinafter "Morohashi '827") in view of U.S. Patent App. Publ'n No. 2004/0223245 to Morohashi (hereinafter "Morohashi '245").

The Office Action acknowledged Morohashi '827 does not explicitly teach all of the features of independent Claim 16.¹ To remedy that deficiency, the Office Action relied on Morohashi '245.

Morohashi '245 was filed June 9, 2004, and was published November 11, 2004. Meanwhile, the present application claims priority to Japanese Patent App. No. 2004-049617 (hereinafter "the '617 application"), which has a filing date of February 25, 2004. To perfect priority to the '617 application, Applicant files herewith an accurate English translation of that application and a statement signed by the translator regarding the accuracy of the translation.

Applicant's perfected priority date predates the filing and publication dates of Morohashi '245. Accordingly, Morohashi '245 cannot properly be applied in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) or (e) against the present application. Further, Morohashi '245 cannot properly be applied under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Thus, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection based on Morohashi '245.

¹ Office Action at 3.

Consequently, in light of the foregoing comments, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application. The application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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